AT

THE ANNUAL MEETING,

Held at HECKMONDWIKE, June 17, 1795,

A PLAN

FOR

A GENERAL UNION

IN

EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER,

THROUGHOUT

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

IN

Yorkshire,

WAS PROPOSED BY THE REV. J. BREWER,

And cordially agreed to

BY ALL THE MINISTERS THEN PRESENT:

And, in Order to give Effect to the Design,

THE REV. J. BREWER AND THE REV. J. HARMAR

Were requested to prepare the following

CIRCULAR LETTER

UPON THE SUBJECT,

Which being read, and approved, at

A MEETING OF THE MINISTERS, AT HALIFAX,

IT WAS ORDERED

TO BE PRINTED AND CIRCULATED.

Huddersfield:

PRINTED BY J. BROOK.

BRITISH MUSEUM

CIRCULAR LETTER.

Dear Brethren,

IT has been clearly manifeſted in all Ages, that, *the effectual fervent Prayer of the Righteous availeth much.* Prayer is a Duty, in the Exerciſe of which, it becomes the Followers of the Lord Jeſus habitually to be found: But there are Times, when an Urgency for a more than *common* Exertion in this Duty will be enforced by extraordinary Circumſtances. Such is the Caſe in the preſent eventful, ſerious moment. The Lord's Voice is lifted up, and it behoves his People to liſten to it! To ſet before you the Neceſſity thereof; to awaken your Attention, and to animate your Hearts in ſo good a Work, is the Deſign of this Letter. It is addreſſed to you by Perſons who wiſh well to your immortal Intereſt, by Perſons who humbly truſt they prefer Jeruſalem to their chief Joy; and feel themſelves affected by a Degree of Zeal for the ſupreme Concerns of their Fellow-Mortals, to call upon you to ſeek his Face, whoſe ſole Prerogative it is, *to comfort the waſte Places of Zion; to make her Wilderneſs like Eden, and her Deſert like the Garden of the Lord.*

The whole of our Circumſtances plead for the Cauſe in which we are now engaged. A Voice from

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the City—A Voice from the Temple—A Voice of the Lord is directed to us to excite our Attention. Conſider our national Circumſtances, and who can be unconcerned? The great God has viſited us with one of his ſore Judgments *War, terrible War* has been making cruel Havock among us. Our Trade has been materially affected, our Country conſiderably depopulated—Thouſands of our young Men have been ſlain by the ſword, and many may ſay, "*We are Or-*"*phans and fatherleſs, and our Mothers are as Widows.*" Hitherto our Land has not been the immediate Seat of the Battle of the Warrior, but how ſoon it may be brought nearer Home, and our Eyes may behold Garments rolled in Blood, is not for us to predict. To adopt the language of a Biſhop, and ſuch language as became a Biſhop, we may ſay, "The Storm with "which the State is threatened, is new in Kind, and "unparalleled in Degree; hitherto we have only "heard its Whiſtling from afar, it may ſoon approach "our Coaſt, and ſcatter tremendous and undiſtin-"guiſhed Ruin over the whole Land*." Under ſuch Apprehenſions, to remain unmoved, will ſubject us to Criminality of that Kind for which the Lord may ſay, *When my Hand is lifted up they will not ſee, but they ſhall ſee.* Iſa. xxvi. 11.

Hitherto our Floors have been full, and we have been fed with the fineſt of Wheat; an evident Scarcity now prevails, the Staff of Bread is broken, and we eat it by Weight, and with Care. Ezek. iv. 16. If God have promiſed, when there is a Famine in the Land, to hear in Heaven his Dwelling-Place, it ſurely becomes

* Biſhop of Llandaff's Speech upon the Motion for a Peace with France.

becomes us to ſeek him while he may be found, leſt the preſent Calamity may be but the *Beginning of Sorrows*, and the Time may yet come when it ſhall be ſaid, "*He that is ſlain by the Sword is better than he that is ſlain with Hunger,*" Lam. iv. 9.

The carnal Mind, which is Enmity againſt God, has ever ſought Occaſions ſucceſsfully to oppoſe its Maker. The preſent Day is too favourable to its Deſigns. INFIDELITY has thrown off the Maſk, and DEISM glories in its ſhameful Courſe. Not only have ſome of the great Truths of our divine Maſter been formidably oppoſed, but the Scriptures themſelves, the glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God, are treated with Contempt. The Father of Lies has his Emiſſaries everywhere prowling about to catch the unwary. The riſing Generation is in peculiarly hazardous Circumſtances. It is the Duty of the Friends of Truth, the real Followers of the bleſſed Jeſus, to buckle on their Armour, and aſſail the Foe, leſt we ſhould ſee the Truth of our God fallen in the Street. Compaſſion to the Youth of our Land—to the Souls of our own Children, ſhould operate upon our Minds, to rouſe us all up to call upon God, that *when the Enemy is coming in like a Flood, his Spirit may lift up a Standard againſt him.*

It was cuſtomary for holy Men of old to mourn for the Sins of others. *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes becauſe they keep not thy Law.* Pſa. cxix. 136. The preſent Day is a Day of boundleſs Profligacy. Vice, in all its infernal Variety prevails throughout the Land—The Bulk of its Inhabitants eſpouſe the melancholy Cauſe—Pride, Oppreſſion, Extravagancy, and Uncleanneſs, may boaſt of the Numbers engaged in

in their Support. And ought not we to endeavour to avert him from his Purpoſe, who has declared that he will viſit for theſe Things? And if, after all, we cannot prevail in turning away his Anger from us, we ſhall enjoy the Satisfaction of having made the Attempt, and be happy in a Conſciouſneſs, that we ſhall be found among thoſe who ſhall have a *Mark in their Foreheads, as Men who have ſighed and cried for the Abominations which have been done among them.* Exek. ix.

But, O Brethren, if we walk about Zion, and make our Obſervations upon her preſent State, is there no Cauſe for Lamentation? No extraordinary Cauſe to cry mightily to God? Whilſt we rejoice that many People are ſaying, *Come let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord,* we fear Religion, pure Religion, is very low; primitive Piety, ſcriptural Godlineſs very ſcarce. Where is that holy Singularity, that godly Circumſpection, which ſo honourably diſtinguiſhed our good Forefathers? Where is that Love and brotherly Kindneſs, that long Suffering and Gentleneſs, the genuine Fruits of the good Spirit of our God? Alas! Alas! they are barely known. Is it not to be feared, that Indifference to family Religion—too great a Conformity to the preſent evil World in the Whole of our daily Courſe—too conſtant an Eſtrangement from the regular Practice of ſacred Retirement—too great a Languor about Things of eternal Moment, and too little Spirituality prevail throughout our Churches? And if ſo, what ought we to do? A Throne of Grace is open. He that ſits upon it waits to be gracious: Let us then ſeek his Face, that the Spirit may be poured from on high; that a Revival may take Place in the Midſt of us, and that JEHOVAH may triumph glorioufly in the

Converſion

Converſion of immortal Souls to himſelf; that the Hearts of his Miniſters may be inflamed with Zeal for the Lord of Hoſts, to cry aloud and ſpare not, and that all who name the Name of Chriſt may walk in the Fear of the Lord, and the Comfort of the Holy Ghoſt.

While we are thus intreating the Father of Mercies upon our own Account, let us recollect, how many Millions of the Sons of Men are at this Moment, ſitting in the Region of the Shadow of Death —Men, who are to live for ever, but have never heard of a Saviour's Name. O remember their deplorable State, and in tender Compaſſion to their immortal Souls, recommend them to the God of all Grace, that he may viſit them with his Light and Truth; to take to himſelf his great Power, and reign to the Ends of the Earth.

In Order to give Effect to this Deſign, a Plan has been formed, and the Execution of it already begun, TO SET APART THE FIRST MONDAY IN EACH KALENDAR MONTH, FOR A GENERAL UNION IN EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER, to obtain the Objects already ſpecified in this Letter. It is intended that all who approve of the ſame, ſhould meet together at *Seven o'Clock in the Evening*, in their reſpective Places of Worſhip, or in any other Place that may be more convenient: And where Circumſtances will not admit of a *general* Meeting of the Members of one Congregation, for the ſame to diſtribute itſelf in ſuch a Manner, and at ſuch a Time, as may beſt ſuit their particular Situation.

By ſuch an Engagement, what may we not promiſe to ourſelves? If the Lord Jeſus have declared, that *when two of his People ſhall agree on Earth, as touching any Thing that they ſhall aſk, it ſhall be done for them by his Father who is in Heaven;* (Mat. xviii. 19.) what may we not look for, when ſo many Thouſands, as we hope, will unite in this Deſign, are agreed to aſk the ſame Things? Surely we ſhall not ſeek his Face in vain. We have abundant Ground in the Scriptures for the moſt exalted Hopes. There we behold what Wonders have been done by Prayer. We are compaſſed about with a Cloud of Witneſſes, whoſe Teſtimony will confirm the Truth of his Word who hath ſaid, *Call upon me, and I will ſhew thee great and mighty Things which thou knoweſt not.* Jer. xxxiii. 3.

Brethren, let us delay no longer, but at once come out zealouſly to the Help of the Lord. Judges v. 23. Admit of no Excuſe. "Nothing was ever got by ſinning, or loſt by praying." Seaſons of Prayer are Seaſons of Profit. We have too long indulged ourſelves in unbecoming Sloth. It is now high Time to awake out of Sleep. Dependent upon the never-failing Interceſſion of an adorable Redeemer, and the invincible Agency of the Holy Ghoſt, let us approach the Mercy-Seat, under a firm Perſuaſion, that by "Blood and "Prayer, the Church always has prevailed."